

Environmental End-of-Year Report December 2021

Happy New Year! – 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the Benton County Environmental Division and we are excited for what the future holds. Our entire staff are state certified law enforcement officers specializing in the enforcement of state environmental laws and county ordinances. We are commissioned by the County Sheriff and the County Judge. We also eradicate illegal dump sites and most importantly educate the public about the importance of protecting the environment.

The Quorum Court approved the hiring of an additional officer in April, so we will be seeing a lot more education and other proactive actions. Across the country on January 9th each year, citizens show support for law enforcement officers so I want to take this opportunity to thank our Benton County Environmental Enforcement Officers Timothy Filbeck and Kelsey Spry for their service to our citizens and environment.



Community Policing - Our Officers work extra patrols in areas where there have been a large amount of illegal dumping with the expectation that regular presence of Environmental Officers in these areas will curtail occurrences of roadside dumping. In December we conducted 3 extra patrols and during 2021 we conducted 42. Our signs (pictured above right) not only warn dumpers that large fines are associated with dumping but there are also free alternatives. In December we installed 5 illegal dumping signs. During 2021 we installed 13 signs and in the last 6 years we have installed 114 illegal dumping and no littering signs across the county. We also utilize surveillance cameras in areas of frequent dumping (pictured above left). In December we installed cameras at 5 locations and in 2021 we installed cameras at 25 locations.

Staff Training – In December Officer Filbeck and I completed firearms training at the range. In December Sr. Officer Filbeck completed 17 hours of training including taser re-certification as well as range and drone practice. Officer Spry completed 32 hours of online Criminal Investigations. In 2021 our staff completed more than 223 hours of training.



Roadside Dumping – In 2021 we removed waste from 90 illegal dump sites along county roads. Illegal dump sites present hazards to our community including water pollution, flooding, fires, and diseases from mosquitos and rodents. The community is also affected economically due to the cost of remediation, reduction of tourism and reduced property values. In December we remediated 5 sites in the Lowell and Rogers areas.

Feb. 2021 – Couch at Spanker Creek Road, Bentonville



Feb. 2021 - Tires at Kelly Pond, Decatur



March 2021 – Freezer at Quail Drive, Rogers



March 2021 - Television at Stephen's Road, Siloam Springs



April 2021 – Mattress at Primrose, Lowell



December 2021 – 300 tires dumped in Monte Ne area

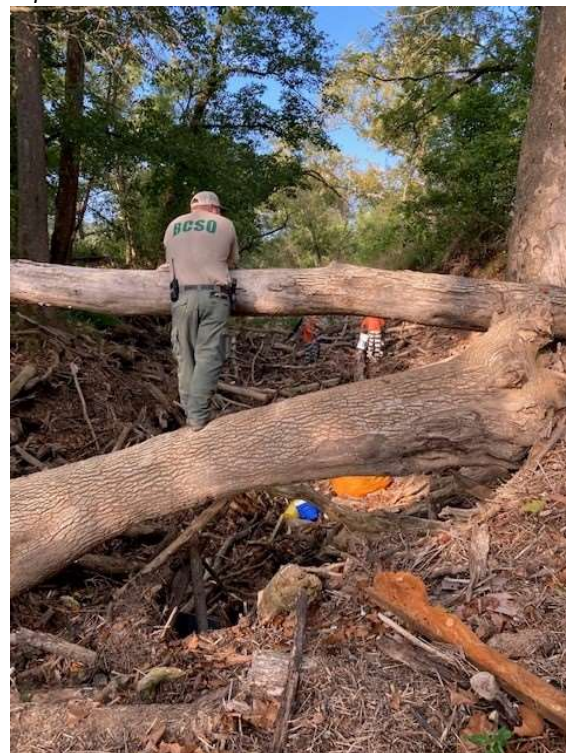


Inmate Crews – The Benton County Sheriff's Office has assisted our agency with inmate crews 35 times in 2021! We are so very grateful to have their help. They do the heavy lifting like removing large numbers of dumped tires and unloading them again at the District to be recycled, they go down county roads and pick up litter and this year they also assisted us with garden maintenance at the rain garden located at the Road Department in Bentonville.

April 2021 – Ravine on Smith Ridge Rd., Garfield



September 2021 – Wet-weather creek on Gooseberry Rd., Bentonville



Environmental Division Programs – Our division proudly provide the following programs to our community.

Oct. 2021 –Environmental Education at Carnival



Mar. 2021 – Rain Garden



Mar. 2021 - Adopt a Road group picked up litter.



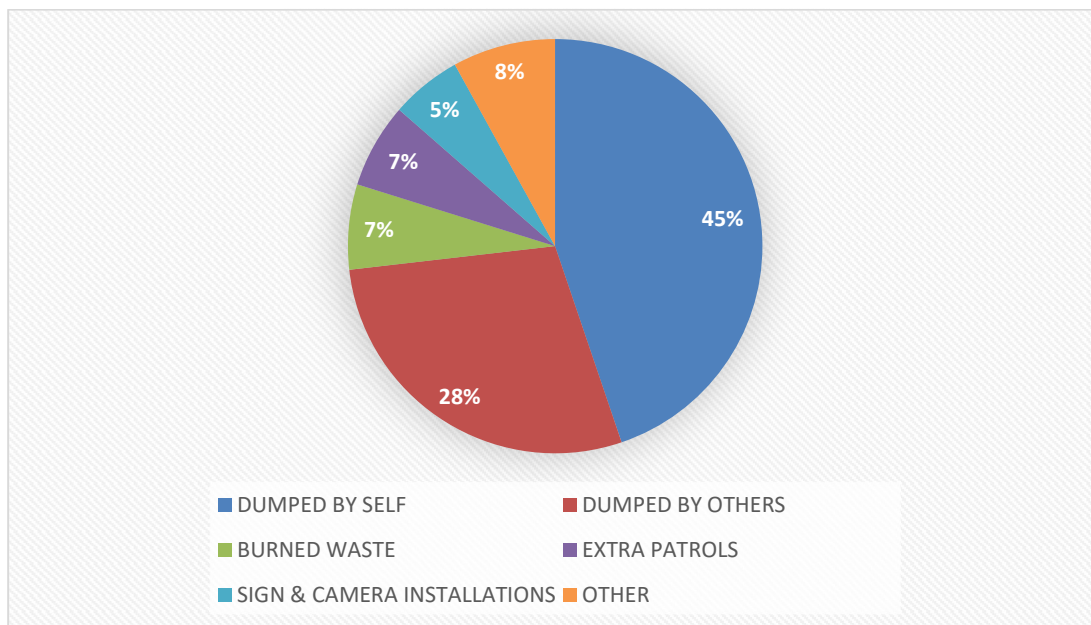
1. The **Adopt a Road** program includes volunteers from service organizations, businesses and families who help make our county cleaner. They adopt sections of the 2,000 miles of Benton County roads and pick up litter twice a year.
2. The **Special Waste Drop-off** program is a collaborative effort between the Benton County Environmental Division, BCSWD, and most cities to provide recycling and safe disposal of large bulky household items including furniture, electronics, tires, scrap metal, appliances, and a variety of household hazardous waste.
3. The **Environmental Education** program educates both young people and the general public about environmental responsibility.
4. The Benton County **Green Team** is coordinated by our division to lead a group of agencies, businesses, and citizens working together to provide environmental education through public events.
5. The **Rain Garden** located at the Road Department on 14th St., Bentonville is maintained by our division. We promote the benefits of alternative stormwater management at this teaching garden.
6. **Waste Not - Want Not** is the county government's internal recycling program. We partner with the County Janitorial Department to provide in-house recycling stations, desk recycling bins, coordination of recycling services, collection of used toner cartridges, batteries, and electronic devices.

<i>PAID BY COUNTY</i>	<i>COST</i>	<i># OF LOADS</i>	<i>COST /LOAD</i>
2015 Cleanup events	\$ 87,819.71	2,752	\$31.91
2016 Convenience Centers	\$143,639.53	11,330	\$12.68
2017 Convenience Centers	\$174,986.73	15,749	\$11.11
2018 Convenience Centers	\$133,659.32	18,703	\$ 7.15
2019 Convenience Centers	\$191,451.50	20,576	\$9.30
2020 Convenience Centers	\$177,703.45	19,745	\$9.00
2021 Special Waste Drop-off	\$157,123.35	16,126	\$9.74

Special Waste Drop Off –In December 687 loads of waste were taken at Centerton, 422 loads at Rogers, and 51 loads in Siloam Springs. In 2021 the sites combined received 3,069 visits for household hazardous waste disposal, 2,062 appliance items, 4,969 electronic items, 14,380 pieces of furniture, 18,201 pieces of metal, and 8,515 tires (*December estimated*).

302 dumpsters and 658 tons of waste was collected at the Special Waste Drop Off in 2021.

The chart below shows enforcement actions taken and types of violations in Benton County this year.



Most of our cases in 2021 were neighbors reporting violations at neighboring properties (45%). There is usually a mixture of the types of waste found at these properties. When waste is dumped on roadsides (28%), the most frequently dumped item is furniture. Burning waste still happens in Benton County but does not occur often (7%). Other violations and actions include littering, spilling loads, agency assists, theft and stagnant water occur in about 8% of our cases. About 7% of our cases are extra patrols and 5% are installations of signs and/or cameras.



How and Where to Recycle Your Christmas Tree After the Holidays

1. Curbside collection – Contact your trash collection provider to inquire about collection of trees.
2. Recycle it yourself – Remove decorations and place in the backyard to use as a bird feeder and sanctuary.
3. Artificial Trees – Remove decorations and bring to a Special Waste Drop-off site year-round.

5702 Brookside Rd., Bentonville	Tuesday-Saturday 8:00-11:00 & 12:00-3:00
1108 Arkansas St., Rogers	Tuesday-Saturday 8:00-11:00 & 12:00-3:00
1108 E Ashley St., Siloam Springs	1 st & 3 rd Saturday monthly 8:00 – 12:00
4. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission takes live Christmas trees you can drop off at several sites. All decorations must be removed. For more information go to **www.agfc.com**. No artificial trees.
 - Beaver Lake – Highway 12 Access and AGFC Don Roufa Highway 412 Access
 - Lake Elmdale – Boat Ramp Access
 - Bob Kidd Lake – Boat Ramp Access
 - Crystal Lake – Boat Ramp Access

CAUTION: Never burn Christmas trees in a fireplace. Evergreen trees have a high content of flammable turpentine oils and may contribute to creosote buildup and risk a chimney fire. Resources:

<https://www.pickyourownchristmastree.org/disposing.php>

Environmental Enforcement

In December we received 29 new reports of illegal dumping and for the year of 2021 we received 368 new reports. We investigate environmental violations generated by citizen reports on properties located outside city limits and reserve citations as a last resort. Citations were written on 25 cases in 2021 (6.8%). We provide education, cleanup of illegal dump sites along county roads, installation of signs, installation of surveillance cameras and extra patrols in areas of frequent dumping. The following are some cases that were closed in December.

The majority of the debris on this property came from tenants that were supposed to be “friends.” The property owner was diagnosed with severe medical issues so the property was remediated slowly after 692 days. The property owner was grateful that leniency and compassion were shown to his special case.

BEFORE:



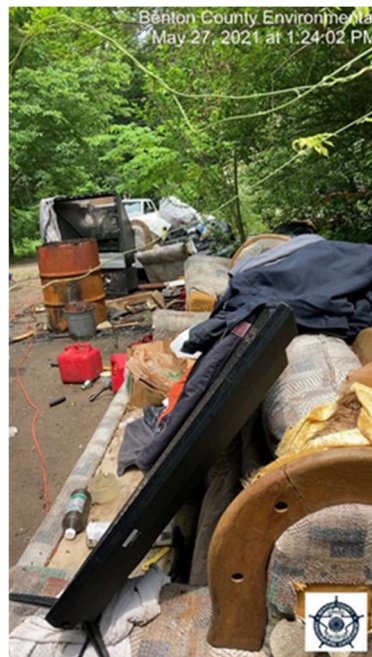
AFTER:



This property was outside the city limits of Lowell. There were delays due to family illnesses, vehicle trouble, contraction of COVID and then cancer treatment, but the property was finally brought into compliance.

BEFORE:

AFTER:



This case was on Key Road outside of Rogers city limits. This property has had multiple cases in the past which resulted in citations. The property owner's wife had passed away and he was left with everything she had collected over time. I provided the property owner with information on where he could take his solid waste and after 30 days the property was clean and in compliance.

BEFORE:



AFTER:



The Year in Pictures

January – Roadside dump



February – Roadside dump



March – Kidney cancer awareness



April – Officer Spry is sworn in



May – Evidence found at roadside dump



June – Rain garden in bloom



July – Extra patrol at Snavelly bridge



August – Roadside dump



September – Camera stolen



October – Pick Up Where You Play



November – Roadside dump



December – New case on Mulberry Lane



ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENSES and actions initiated in December.

OFFENSE TYPE	QTY
Burn (appliances)	0
Burn (auto bodies & parts)	0
Burn (construction debris)	0
Burn (electronics)	1
Burn (furniture)	0
Burn (general waste)	1
Burn (household garbage)	1
Burn (mobile home)	0
Burn (tires)	1
Bury (auto bodies & parts)	0
Bury (construction debris)	0
Bury (electronics)	0
Bury (furniture)	0
Bury (general waste)	0
Bury (household garbage)	0
Bury (mobile home)	0
Bury (trees)	0
Dumped by others (appliances)	1
Dumped by others (auto bodies & parts)	1
Dumped by others (construction debris)	0
Dumped by others (electronics)	0
Dumped by others (furniture)	4
Dumped by others (general waste)	2
Dumped by others (household garbage)	0
Dumped by others (metal)	1
Dumped by others (mobile home)	0
Dumped by others (tires)	1
Dumped by others (trees)	0
Dumped by self (appliances)	2
Dumped by self (auto bodies & parts)	3
Dumped by self (construction debris)	2
Dumped by self (electronics)	1
Dumped by self (furniture)	3
Dumped by self (general waste)	4
Dumped by self (household garbage)	2
Dumped by self (metal)	1
Dumped by self (mobile home)	0
Dumped by self (tires)	4
Dumped by self (trees)	0
OTHER	QTY
Agency Assist	0
Camera Installation	5
Extra Patrol	4
Littering	0
Sign installation	5
Filing False Police Report with LEA	1

ACTIONS TAKEN THIS MONTH	QTY
NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS ISSUED	3
WARNINGS ISSUED	1
CITATIONS ISSUED	2
WARRANTS ISSUED	1
COURT APPEARANCES	0
CASE STATUS	QTY
CASES OPENED THIS MONTH	29
TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES OPENED YTD	368

What does an Environmental Officer Investigate?

Environmental Officers are limited to enforcement of solid waste violations in unincorporated Benton County and do not regulate inside any city limits.

We DO NOT investigate septic issues, structure fires, agricultural waste, dead animals such as pets or wild animals, or the illegal disposal of hazardous material.

Our division responds to violations of solid waste regulations that may include;

1. Construction or operation of a solid waste disposal facility or disposal site.
2. Dumping of solid waste upon property owned by another person.
3. Dumping of solid waste on the side of public roads or public property.
4. Solid waste on one's own property that can potentially create a public nuisance or health hazard.
5. Dumping of solid waste into a waterway.
6. Burning of solid waste.
7. Burying of solid waste.

